

# *Saint Louis Audubon*

## *Bulletin*

January, 1959

Vol. 27, No. 2

### **WATERWAY WILDLIFE**

The next highlight of our season is the forthcoming Audubon Screen Tour on Thursday, January 22, at 8:15 p. m. when Karl H. Maslowski presents his colorful panorama entitled "Waterway Wildlife". This film depicts the activities of many wild creatures harbored and nurtured by a Midwestern watershed. Included are muskrats, white-tailed deer, least bittern, Canada geese, rock bass, cottontail rabbits, red foxes, mink and crayfish. Karl Maslowski's spectacular photography accompanied by effective sound recordings of waterway dwellers, and an informative narrative and forceful conservation message make this a superlative Screen Tour program.

Mr. Maslowski was born in Georgia but his family moved to Ohio in his infancy. Most of his professional life has been devoted to photographing American wild life in still and color motion pictures. For 2½ years he served the Army Air Corps as a combat photographer in North Africa, Italy, Corsica, France, and Austria. He is a board member of the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History and a trustee of the Cincinnati Zoo. For 20 years he has written a weekly nature column in the Cincinnati Enquirer and has also published numerous articles on natural science. His photography is outstanding.

This screen tour, as previous ones, will be held at the Third Baptist Church, Grand and Washington Avenues, at 8:15 p. m.

### **ATTRACTING SONGBIRDS**

BY LEONARD HALL

Many articles are written about attracting songbirds but not all of them apply to our conditions in Missouri. Nor do suggestions which work wonders in one sort of Missouri environment seem to apply in other environments. Generally speaking, the older suburbs around our cities, as well as many of our smaller towns, offer excellent songbird territory because of their large number of trees and dense cover of shrubbery. Even in the cities themselves residential areas close to parks or districts where the trees have been preserved and yards are of good size offer fair cover and attract at least the bolder species.

A story is quite different in most of the newer residential subdivisions which are springing up like wildfire around cities and towns all across America. Here in the mid-west, as in other parts of the country where we have travelled, a requirement for the subdivision seems to be the destruction and removal of every iota of natural cover before

the building starts. Trees are bull-dozed out ruthlessly and the land levelled to the clay hard-pan. After the houses are built a thin layer of topsoil is hauled back in and spread to make lawn.

If we live in town, we have to face our birding limitations, do what we can to correct them and let it go at that. In the older suburbs, cover for the songbirds is seldom a problem and the task is generally to add species of shrubbery that provide a good food supply. Here we have a choice between many nursery varieties and a number of Missouri "natives" that not only attract songbirds but are attractive on their own account. Among those that will grow in the territory immediately around St. Louis are perhaps a dozen that are worth consideration.

Flowering dogwood is, of course, one of our most attractive small trees. Its flowers, autumn leaves and scarlet fruits make it a universal favorite. The cover it provides, however, is not dense, nor is the fruit crop apt to be heavy. There is another member of the *Cornus* family, however, that should be used far more widely as a decorative shrub than it is today. This is the rough-leaved dogwood (*Cornus asperifolia*) that grows throughout the southeastern United States and is found in most Missouri counties. It blooms in June with clusters of handsome creamy white flowers and in autumn bears bunches of white berries that the songbirds love. It seems to us in September that this is the preferred fruit of tanagers and many other songbirds.

There are other natives that are well worth considering both for their beauty and their bird-attracting qualities. Our Missouri black haw (sometimes called sheep berry or stag-bush) is one of these. Not to be confused with the hawthorns, this is one of our three *Viburnums*. It makes a handsome, well-shaped small tree with glossy leaves, large flower clusters in early summer, and a good crop of dark blue berries that are sweet and edible though of little importance as a fruit for humans. The two other *viburnums*, while not quite as decorative, also bear profusely and are liked by the birds.

There are, in Missouri, almost countless other small trees and shrubs that are native and can often be found growing in the woods where they can be transplanted without damage to the existing environment. One of the lesser known of these is *Bumelia*, sometimes called chittam wood, which blooms in late July with inconspicuous flowers, but produces a large quantity of small black fruit. The Missouri River is the northern boundary for this species but it has a place in the wild shrubbery or small tree area. There are one or two native privets in Missouri (*Forestiera*) with luxuriant foliage and a good crop of fruits. Deciduous holly (*Ilex decidua*) is one of our handsomest, with bright red berries that often stay on the twigs until spring. Tree huckleberry bears delicate white flowers in May and a bountiful crop of dark blue

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fruits in autumn. Yellow buckthorn or Indian cherry (*Rhamnus Caroliniana*) is an excellent ornamental, growing into a thickly branched small tree with shiny foliage that persists long after frost. The flower is tiny and inconspicuous, though greatly enjoyed by the honeybee, and the fruits are large and prolific, turning gradually from pink to red to blue.

There are a dozen other native Missouri trees and shrubs — and vines such as the bittersweet — that deserve a place in our decorative and foundation plantings, especially if we want to attract the birds. Some are available from the nurseryman, some must be dug in the woods — but all are common and hardy and, having little or no economic value, can be moved without causing any loss.

Especially if I were considering the plantings for a new house would I give these old friends careful consideration. Too often we are satisfied with a few exotic evergreens which, granted they have their place in the scheme of things, can become hackneyed when used to excess. They furnish cover, too, but no food; and it is upon our ability to supply both that our success in attracting the songbirds depends.

## BLUE CROSS FOR BIRDS

BY EVA AND KEMPS KIRKPATRICK

A commonplace incident sent us investigating a new field of research in Blue Cross for Birds. An excellent specimen of a Red-tailed Hawk was shot by a farmer and flew three miles after being wounded. By the time we were notified and had arrived at our destination (76 miles) the bird had suffered a severe loss of blood, the bullet having pierced the wing. We were unable to save him.

The question arose in our minds at the time, "Might the bird have been saved if we had been able to give a blood transfusion?" For advice we turned to Dr. Hampton Carson, Professor of Zoology, Washington University. The first thing we wanted to know was, "Do birds have different types of blood, as human beings do; if so, what were they?"

Dr. Carson assured us they did have different types of blood, but that is about as much as is known. So with the accumulation of the proper serological equipment, we plan to try to pierce into this mystery and to hope in a matter of months to find some of the answers to at least a part of this question.

Other points that will need to be answered are these: Will a red-shouldered hawk have the same blood type as an owl; or would we need the blood of another red-shouldered hawk; or might Cooper's Hawks' blood suffice? How would a large bird's blood compare with that of small birds?

How much dare we take from a donor? Would it be possible to have a bird blood bank? To delve into this fascinating subject would be our pleasure. The practical aspects also do not disturb us as this is our hobby, and we are curious.

We have had this experience: that compound fractures of the wing are also fairly common. We noted that there was generally the tendency of the birds to tear at the splint or bandage, at times inflicting more damage than the original. Of course, tranquilizers were a great help in these cases.

Then the thought occurred, would it be possible to pin a wing, making a splint unnecessary, and enabling the bird to fly after a serious break of this kind? Our most likely patient was a crow that was brought to us with bone protruding from the right wing. The bird was of a good size to try our experiment. First of all, it is necessary to know that a bird's bones are hollow. In human beings, the metal used to pin

a hip, for example, must be rust proof. A stainless steel phonograph needle happened to suit our purpose, and in the case of the crow, fit in the marrow cavity of the bone exactly. The bone was clipped clean of jagged points, and the needle inserted into the cavity; the ends were fitted together and skin sewed back into place.

The bird recovered, but unfortunately, we had no way of knowing whether the needle has stayed where we put it, or later slipped. Again, Dr. Carson came up with an excellent idea. Would plastic pins serve our purpose, have less weight and perhaps less tendency to slip? This idea would enable us to work on smaller birds as plastic is more varied in size. This, too, is a problem to be answered in the future, when we have more opportunity to experiment in this provocative field.

### FIELD TRIP

On Saturday, January 17, there will be a field trip at the Arboretum, Gray's Summit, beginning at 8 a. m. Participants are to meet at the main gate at that hour. Leaders will be—Jim Comfort, Earl Hath, and Alberta Bolinger.

If the temperature is under 10 degrees, call Earl Hath as to revision of schedule — YO 5-8642.

### NEWS BRIEFS

Ferguson's newspaper "Town Talk" is carrying a series of articles by Wellington F. Scott that are of timely interest to all our members. The first of this series was a most interesting article entitled "A Winter Visitor to the Bird Feeder."

Miss Elizabeth Golterman has just been appointed to the Advisory Committee of Title VII of the U. S. Office of Education.

A whooping crane was sighted December 7 at Mingo Wildlife Refuge by the following:

Alberta Bolinger  
Dorothea Vogel  
Dick and Mitzi Anderson  
Jack McDonald

Jim Comfort  
Dave Jones  
George Cameron

### ST. LOUIS AUDUBON BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BY

The St. Louis Audubon Society

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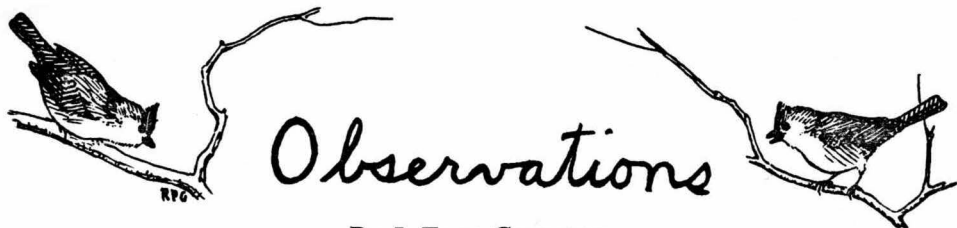
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By J. EARL COMFORT

St. Louis Area Autumn and early winter birding was considerably below par in general, migrant warblers especially letting us down by passing through our region with no lingering concentration to delight the bird listeners. Since this situation prevails when we experience no seasonable combination of adverse weather conditions we apparently lacked the ill wind that blows nobody good birding. Because our shore-birding was scarcely better than the warbler watching we were by passed by two of the main families upon which many of us count heavily for fair birding before winter sets in.

With pleasant weather prevailing throughout the day the St. Louis Audubon picnic at the Jamerson McCormacks estate overlooking the Mississippi River below Kimmswick was well attended. A.M. and P.M. nature walks adding much to the general enjoyment. This October 4th outing was made possible through the generosity and kindness of the host and hostess who showed the enthusiastic gathering through their spacious home and made the day pleasant for everyone through courtesies and other extra curricular favors so delightful to the assembled guests.

Good weather again favored us on our Creve Coeur Lake Audubon nature walk on October 25th, large groups of enthusiastic children accompanying teachers or other leaders, lending encouragement to those in charge who feel the attraction of youngsters make the field trips even more worthy of exploitation since the future of our natural resources will later be in the hands of this generation. An awakened interest in nature conservation by our youth is definitely a step in the right direction and a boost in the prospects for future proper resources legislation.

Our Duck Hawk (Peregrine Falcon) has returned to its wintering haunts in downtown St. Louis where it has again been observed by several persons, including Dick Anderson, who made a special trip to the section it favors in order to list it (12th and Olive vicinity).

There were two large flights by migrating Broad-winged Hawks in our region, one numbering more than 200 seen by Patti Grace, another, of lesser numbers, by Paul Licht. Fortunate, indeed, is the observer who happens to be looking up at the right time and in the right place when one of these spectacular migrations is in progress.

A whooping Crane stopping off at the Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge near St. Joseph, Mo. made local headlines with an account with its picture appearing in the St. Louis Globe Democrat, the noteworthy story supplied by Jim Comfort, editor of Missouri Audubon Society's BLUEBIRD. The excellent picture, taken at the refuge with a telephoto lens, showed Sandhill Cranes and geese in the company of the rare crane. These smaller Sandhills would also cause much excitement were they to favor our area with a visit. The Globe also has carried several accounts of another Whooper, the large white bird with the black wing tips remaining in the vicinity of Quincy, Ill. for some three weeks in October and November. Since the dates of the two birds coincided there we two of the cranes, both of which are first modern records for the two states, both birds being viewed by many visitors with pictures

of both fortunately secured. The Quincy bird left many tracks in the mud suitable for plaster casts. The *GLOBE* is deserving of high compliments for its precise nature articles and excellent reporting of local nature events during the past few years.

Several St. Louis Audubon members attended the Mo. Audubon annual meeting October 11th and 12th at the Lake of the Ozarks State Park, enjoying a fine program and pleasant Nature walks. Rarest birds listed were Pigeon and Sharp-shinned Hawks and a Spotted Towhee. Most popular birds were the Pileated Woodpeckers, so common in the area.

On November 1st Alberta Bolinger, Dorothea Vogel and Earl Com-fort enjoyed watching the large concentration of ducks and geese that have taken sanctuary in the Swan Lake Wildfowl Refuge with 21 kinds of water birds listed, 13 of them ducks. Unusual were the Hutchin's Canada Geese, which measured considerably smaller than the Blue and Snow geese which, in turn, are much smaller than our regular Canadas. A Spotted Towhee was also a welcome listing.

The various Webster Groves Nature Study Society monthly August A. Busch Wildlife Area bird count-nature walks groups were generally enlarged by St. Louis Audubon members, most of whom hold joint membership in the State and Webster societies. Such is the mingling of the three local noted nature conservation clubs membership you can't tell an individual member without a score card.

The migration numbers of Red-headed Woodpeckers and Bluejays were exceptionally high during October. Brown Creepers were noted for their absence.

Connie and Earl Hath were delighted by an early arriving Red-breasted nuthatch at their well supplied bird feeder.

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## OLYMPIC ADVENTURES

BY EUGENE WILHELM

Mountains — water — life. These three elements characterize the Olympic Peninsula, a picturesque but little known projection of land situated in the extreme northwestern corner of the state of Washington. Within this natural treasurehouse of wilderness and beauty exciting adventures take place. Such incidents are commonplace and repetitious in the eyes of nature, but for man extraordinary to behold.

We had been following the "run" for some time. The early morning was gray and still, and unfortunately humid. Here in the midst of the lush green rain forest one-hundred percent humidity is nothing uncommon. So humid is the rain forest that four species of coniferous trees attain their greatest dimensions within a short distance of each other. Some magnificent specimens of Sitka Spruce, one of the giant species, towered above us, acting like huge guardians of the forest—erect, quiet, watchful. On a typical day such as this the rain forest takes on a greenish hue, caused by the nearly perpetual green of the surroundings. The trunks and crowns of the tree giants are covered with a rich growth of air plants — numerous mosses, liverworts, and lichens. Beneath the high crowns of the forest giants canopies of "moss curtains" hang suspended from the trunks and branches of the Bigleaf Maples.

The floor of the forest is relatively clean, except for the many logs that have a thick mat covering of mosses and fungi, or colonnades of saplings.

Suddenly, after many minutes of attentive listening and walking, a deep sound echoed through the forest. We stopped instantly and listened. Again, after a slight pause, the same deep bellowing reached



our ears. Whatever the sound, it was only a few hundred feet ahead.

We moved cautiously now, crouching low and piercing the thick underbrush ahead for some clue, and then — a wide clearing appeared and in that clearing a herd of fifty reclining Roosevelt Elk. Then, without warning, a lone sentinel standing well camouflaged to one side, gave a loud bugle, and instantaneously several cows, calves, and yearling jumped to their feet and trotted off through the dense foliage of the rain forest. Within one minute we had observed and lost a large herd of Olympic Elk.

One week later we packed our necessary gear on our backs and began an overnight expedition into the high country on the north side of the park. Destination — Klahhane Ridge, a tall rugged mass of igneous rock just northeast of the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center. The trail from the Visitor Center to the ridge is quite steep and narrow, and our movement upward was strenuous and time consuming.

The source of the Klahhane Ridge trail lies in the highest forested life zone in the park, the Hudsonian, easily distinguished by the groves of Alpine Fir and the extensive open meadows. During the short summer season nearly one-hundred species of wildflowers abound in these subalpine meadows. But this adventure was not concerned with the colorful Hudsonian belt, but instead with the high, cool, windswept life zone called the Arctic Alpine. The Arctic Alpine, highest life zone anywhere in the world, is comparable to latitudes much nearer the poles. Several species of vegetation which subsist north of the Arctic circle from Alaska to Greenland also occur in Olympic National Park above 6000 feet elevation. Here, no trees grow, only low-lying plants that can survive in an environment of cold temperatures, strong winds, and high evaporation.

At the first junction of the trail we turned right and began a long series of switchbacks that eventually would deposit us atop the high ridge above.

The lodge and road below us became minute in size, while along the trail we noted fresh bear signs in the form of tracks, skat, and "tree barking." We intensively searched the Alpine Fir groves for the black bruin, but only a few Columbia Black-tailed Deer bounded down the slope.

The wind atop the ridge was severe and cold, and we knew that we had to quickly find a suitable campsite before the light of the day gave way to darkness. An open area surrounded by huge boulders and a few sickly trees looked inviting, and soon we were settled. Only then did we discover the beautiful view before us, looking down the north slope of Klahhane Ridge onto the city of Port Angeles, Juan de Fuca Strait, and over to the Canadian city of Victoria, over twenty air miles away. At dusk the lights of the two cities came on with rhythmic timing, glistening like diamonds in a distant world.

At the break of dawn we were hiking east along the ridge trail, ever watchful for our objective. Startled chipmunks screeched and ran across our trail into the high rocks beyond. Then, far below us on a steep slope, we spotted our objective — a herd of twenty-one Mountain Goats — slowly moving toward the rocky ridge above. We nervously watched and waited from behind two boulders. Soon the herd broke up, and twelve goats headed in our direction. They finally paused in a grassy basin only a few hundred feet below us. Two nanny goats with twins squatted down on the snow field and began to roll hither and yon. Meanwhile, the kids were having relaxation of their own playing tag with each other, running and sliding in the snow. A few yearling in the background resorted to dust baths instead of the cold snow, and later investigations showed that these dust baths were used often by



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the goats to rid themselves of the many flies and other annoying insects.

There was little if any wind, but somehow, in some way, a lone nanny raised her head, sniffed the air, and slowly turned in our direction. Surely and deliberately the nanny advanced toward us until finally we began to feel somewhat uncomfortable. The two sharp dark horns looked uninviting, and the loud snorting seemed too warlike for comfort. The nanny advanced to within six feet of us, so close I could easily detect the bright orange eyes of the white shaggy beast. After giving us careful inspection and apparently satisfied that we were no enemies, the nanny veered to the left and quickly rejoined the other members of the herd. For fully two hours afterwards we leisurely observed the goats feeding, resting and playing, and snapped pictures to prove we had been so close to these wild mammals.

The Mountain Goat is not native to Olympic like the Elk, but was imported prior to the establishment of the park. Since its initial release in the late 1920's the herd has grown and has become widespread throughout the high country of the park. An estimate of 300 animals seems accurate.

The animals of any National Park are an integral part of the wilderness scene. The animals are wild, living in their natural habitat. Not only must the animals and their normal habits be preserved, but their wilderness homes as well. Whether the presence of man will be disturbing to the wilderness and its inhabitants depends upon how man behaves in it. Let us hope that personal adventures with wildlife will always remain a reality in our National Parks.

(Eugene (Gene) Wilhelm has been a Seasonal Ranger Naturalist with the National Park Service for the past four summers. He has seen duty in Shenandoah and Olympic National Parks, and has visited 23 of the remaining 27 National Parks.)

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